# The VALIANTS of VIRGINIA

## By HALLIE ERMINIE RIVES

### ILLUSTRATIONS by LAUREN STOUT



SYNOPSIS.

John Valiant, a rich society favorite, suddenly discovers that the Valiant corporation, which his father founded and which was the principal source of his wealth, had failed. He voluntarily turns over his private fortune to the receiver for the corporation. His entire remaining possessions consist of an old motor car, a white bull dog and Damory court, a neglected estate in Virginia. On the way to Damory court he meets Shirley Dandridge, an auburn-haired beauty, and decides that he is going to like Virginia immensely. Shirley's mother, Mrs. Dandridge, and Major Bristow exchange reminiscences during which it is revealed that the major, Valiant's father, and a man named Sassoon were rivals for the hand of Mrs. Dandridge in her youth. Sassoon and Valiant fought a duel on her account in which the former was killed. Valiant finds Damory court overgrown with weeds and creepers and decides to rehabilitate the place. Valiant saves Shirley from the bite of a snake, which bites him. Knowing the deadliness of the bite, Shirley sucks the poison from the wound and saves his life. Valiant learns for the first time that his father left Virginia on account of a duel in which Doctor Southall and Major Bristow acted as his father's seconds. Valiant and Shirley become good friends. Mrs. Dandridge faints when she meets Valiant for the first time. Valiant discovers that he has a fortune in old walnut trees. The yearly tournament, a survival of the jousting of feudal times, is held at Damory court. At the last moment Valiant takes the place of one of the knights, who is sick, and enters the lists. He wins and chooses Shirley Dandridge as queen of beauty to the dismay of Katherine Fargo, a former sweetheart, who is visiting in Virginia. The tournament ball at Damory court draws the elite of the countryside. Shirley is crowned by Valiant as queen of beauty. Valiant tells Shirley of his love and they become engaged. Katherine Fargo, determining not to give up Valiant without a struggle, points out to Shirley how terrible it would be for the woman who caused the duel to meet Valiant, who looks so much like his father. Shirley, uncertain, but feeling that her mother was in love with the victim of Valiant's pistol, breaks the engagement.

### CHAPTER XXIX.—Continued.

The inquiry was drowned in a shriek from several children in unison. They scrambled to their feet, casting fearful glances over their shoulders. The man who had been lying behind the bush had risen and was coming toward them at a slouching amble, one foot dragging slightly. His appearance, indeed, was enough to cause panic. With his savage face, set now in a grin, and his tramp-like costume, he looked fierce and animal-like. White and black, the children fled like startled rabbits, older ones dragging younger, without a backward look—all save Rickey, who stood quite still, her widening eyes fixed on him in a kind of blanched fascinated terror.

He came close to her, never taking his eyes from hers, then put his heavy grimy hand under her chin and turned her twitching face upward, chuckling.

"Ain't afeard, d——n me!" he said with admiration. "Wouldn't skedaddle with th' fine folks' white-livered young uns! Know who I am, don't ye?"

"Greef King." Rickey's lips rather formed than spoke the name.

"Right. An' I know you, too. Got yes' th' same look ez when ye wuzn't no higher'n my knee. So ye ain't at th' Dome no mo', eh? Purkle an' fine dinning an' a eddication. Ho-ho! Goin' ter make ye another ladyess like the sweet ducky-dovey that rescooed ye from th' lovin' embrace o' yer fond step-parient, eh?"

Rickey's small arm went suddenly out and her fingers tore at his shirt-

"There He Goes!" He Said With Bitter Hatred.

band. "Don't you," she burst in a paroxysm of passion; "don't you even speak her name! If you do, I'll kill you!"

So fierce was her leap that he fell back a step in sheer surprise. Then he laughed loudly. "Why, ye little spittin' wile-cat!" he grinned.

He leaned suddenly, gripped her wrist and covering her mouth tightly with his palm, dragged her behind a clump of dogwood bushes. A heavy step was coming along the wood-path. He held her motionless and breathless in this cruel grip till the pedestrian had passed. It was Major Bristow, his spruce white hat on the back of his head, his unsullied waistcoat dappled with the leaf-shadows. He stepped out briskly toward Damory court, swinging his stick, all unconscious of the fierce scrutiny bent on him from behind the dogwoods.

Greef King did not withdraw his hand till the steps had died in the distance. When he did, he clenched his fist and shook it in the air. "There he goes!" he said with bitter hatred. "Yer noble friend that sent me up for six years t' break my heart on th' rock-pile! Oh, he's a top-notcher, he is! But he's got Greef King to reckon with yit!" He looked at her balefully and shook her.

"Look-a-yere," he said in a hissing voice. "Ye remember me. I'm a bad one ter fool with. Yer maw foun' that out, I reckon. Now ye'll promise me ye'll tell nobody who ye've seen. I'm only a tramp; d'ye hear?" He shook her roughly.

Rickey's fingers and teeth were clenched hard and she said no word. He shook her again viciously, the blood pouring into his scarred face. "Ye snivelin' brat, ye!" he snarled. "I'll show yer!" He began to drag her after him through the bushes. A few yards and they were on the brink of the headlong ugly chasm of Lovers' Leap. She cast one desperate look about her and shut her eyes. Catching her about the waist he leaned over and held her out in mid-air, as if she had been a kitten. "Ye ain't seen me, hev yer? Promise, or over ye go. Ye won't look so pretty when ye're layin' down there on them rocks!"

The child's face was paper-white and she had begun to tremble like a leaf, but her eyes remained closed.

"One—two—" he counted deliberately.

Her eyes opened. She turned one shuddering glance below, then her resolution broke. She clutched his arm and broke into wild supplications. "I promise, I promise!" she cried. "Oh, don't let go! I promise!"

He set her on the solid ground and released her, looking at her with a sneering laugh. "Now we'll see ef ye belong here or up ter Hell's-Half-Acre," he said. "Fine folks keeps their promises, I've heerd tell."

Rickey looked at him a moment shaking; then she burst into a passion of sobs and with her face averted ran from him like a deer through the bushes.

### CHAPTER XXX.

#### In the Rain.

Shirley stood looking out at the rain. It was falling in no steady downpour which held forth promise of ending, but with a gentle constancy that gave the hills a look of sudden discomfort and made disconsolate miry pools by the roadside. The clouds were not too thick, however, to let through a dismal gray brightness that shone on the foliage and touched with glistening lines of high-light the draggled tufts of the soaked blue-grass. Now and then, across the dripping fields, fraying skeins of mist wandered, to lie curdled in the flooded hollows where, here and there, cattle stood lowing at intervals in a mournful key.

The indoors had become impossible to her. She was sick of trying to read, sick of the endless pacings and purposeless invention of needless tasks. She wanted movement, the cobwebby mist about her knees, the wet rain in her face. She ran upstairs and came down clad in a close scarlet jersey, with leather gaiters and a soft hat.

Emmaline saw her thus accoutered with disapproval. "Lawdy-mercy, chile!" she urged; "you ain't goin' out? It's rainin' cats en dawgs!"

"I'm neither sugar nor salt, Emmaline," responded Shirley listlessly, dragging on her rain-coat, "and the walk will do me good."

On the sopping lawn she glanced up at her mother's window. Since the night of the ball her own panging self-consciousness had overlaid the fine and sensitive association between them. She had been full of horrible feeling that her face must betray her and the cause of her loss of spirits be guessed.

Her mother, had, in fact, been troubled by this, but was far from guessing the truth. A somewhat long indisposition had followed her first sight of Valiant, and she had not witnessed the tournament. She had hung upon Shirley's description of it, however, with an excited interest that the other was later to translate in the light of her own discovery. If the thought had flitted to her that fate might hold something deeper than friendship in Shirley's acquaintance with Valiant, it had been of the vaguest. His choice of her as Queen of Beauty had seemed a natural homage to that swift and unflinching act of hers which had saved his life. There was in her mind a more obvious explanation of Shirley's altered demeanor. "Perhaps it's Chilly Lusk," she had said to herself. "Have they had a foolish quarrel, I wonder? Ah, well, in her own time she will tell me."

* * * * * * *

There was some relief to Shirley's overcharged feelings in the very discomfort of the drenched weather: the sucking pull of the wet clay on her boots and the flirt of the drops on her cheeks and hair. She thrust her dog-skin gloves into her pocket and held her arms outstretched to let the wind blow through her fingers. The moisture clung in damp wreaths to her hair and rolled in great drops down her coat as she went.

The wildest, most secluded walks had always drawn her most and she instinctively chose one of these today. It was the road whereon squatted Mad Anthony's whitewashed cabin. "Dah's er man gwine look in dem eyes, honey, en gwine make 'em cry en cry." She had forgotten the incident of that day, when he had read her fortune, but now the quavering prophecy came back to her with a shivering sense of reality. "Fo' dah's flah en she ain' afeah'd, en dah's watah en she ain' afeah'd. Et's de thing whut eat de ha'at outen de breas'—dat whut she afeah'd of!" If it were only fire and water that threatened her!

She struck her hands together with an inarticulate cry. She remembered the laugh in Valiant's eyes as they had planted the roses, the characteristic gesture with which he tossed the waving hair from his forehead—how she had named the ducks and the peacock and chosen the spots for his flowers; and she smiled for such memories, even in the stabbing knowledge that these dear trivial things could mean nothing to her in the future. She tried to realize that he was gone from her life, that he was the one man on earth whom to marry would

"Doesn't That Prove What I Say?" He Said, Bending Toward Her.

be to strike to the heart her love and loyalty to her mother, and she said this over and over to herself in varying phrases:

"You can't! No matter how much you love him, you can't! His father deliberately ruined your mother's life—your own mother! It's bad enough to love him—you can't help that. But you can help marrying him. You would hate yourself. You can never kiss him again, or feel his arms around you. You can't touch his hand. You mustn't even see him. Not if it breaks your heart—as your mother's heart was broken!"

She had turned into an unbeaten way that ambled from the road through a track of tall oaks and pines, scarce more than a bridle-path, winding aimlessly through bracken-strewn depths so dense that even the wild-roses had not found them. In her childish hurts she had always fled to the companionship of the trees. She had known them every one—the black-gum and pale dogwood and gnarled hickory, the prickly-balled "button-wood," the lowly mulberry and the majestic red oak and walnut. They had seemed friendly and pitying counselors, standing about her with arms intertwined. Now, with the rain weeping in soughing gusts through them, they offered her no comfort. She suddenly threw herself face down on the soaked moss.

"Oh, God!" she cried. "I love him so! And I had only that one evening. It doesn't seem just. If I could only have him, and suffer some other way! He's suffering, too, and it isn't our fault! We neither of us harmed anyone! He isn't responsible for what his father did—why, he hardly knew him! Oh, God, why must it be so hard for us? Millions of other people love each other and nothing separates them like this!"

Shirley's warm breath made a little fog against the star-eyed moss. She was scarcely conscious of her wet and clinging clothing, and the soaked strands of her hair. She was so wrapped in her desolation that she no longer heard the sound of the persevering rain and the wet swishing of the bushes—parting now to a hurried step that fell almost without sound on the spongy forest soil. She started up suddenly to see Valiant before her.

He was in a somewhat battered walking suit of brown khaki, with a leather belt and a felt hat whose brim, stiff with the wet, was curved down visor-wise over his brow. In an instant he had drawn her upright, and they stood, looking at each other, drenched and trembling.

"How can you?" he said with a roughness that sounded akin to anger. "Here in this atrocious weather—like this!" he laid a hand on her arm. "You're wet through."

"I—I don't mind the rain," she answered, drawing away, yet feeling with a guilty thrill the masterfulness of his tone, as well as its real concern. "I'm often wet."

His gaze searched her face, feature by feature, noting her pallor, the blue-black shadows beneath her eyes, the caught breath, uneven like a child's from crying. He still held her hands in his.

"Shirley," he said, "I know what you intended to tell me by those flowers—I went to St. Andrew's that night, in the dark, after I read your letter. Who told you? Your—mother?"

"No, no!" she cried. "She would never have told me!"

His face lighted. With an irresistible movement he caught her to him. "Shirley!" he cried. "It shan't be! It shan't, I tell you! You can't break our lives in two like this! It's unthinkable."

"No, no!" she said piteously, pushing him from her. "You don't understand. You are a man, and men—can't."

"I do understand," he insisted. "Oh, my darling, my darling! It isn't right for that spectral thing to come between us! Why, it belonged to a past generation! However sad the outcome of that duel, it held no dishonor. I know only too well the ruin it brought my father! It's enough that it wrecked three lives. It shan't rise again, like Banquo's ghost to haunt ours! I know what you think—I would love you the more, if I could love you more, for that sweet loyalty—but it's wrong, dear. It's wrong!"

"It's the only way."

"Listen. Your mother loves you. If she knew you loved me, she would bear anything rather than have you suffer like this. You say she wouldn't have told you herself. Why, if my father—"

She tore her hands from his and faced him with a cry. "Ah, that is it! You knew your father so little. He was never to you what she is to me. Why, I've been all the life she has had. I remember when she mended my dolls, and held me when I had scarlet fever, and sang me the songs the trees sang to themselves at night. I said my prayers at her knee till I was twelve years old. We were never apart a day till I went away to school."

She paused, breathless.

"Doesn't that prove what I say?" he said, bending toward her. "She loves you far better than herself. She wants your happiness."

"Could that mean hers?" she demanded, her bosom heaving. To see us together.— always — always! To be reminded in everything—the lines of your face—the tones of your voice, maybe—of that! Oh, you don't know how women feel—how they remember—how they grieve! I've gone over all you can say till my soul cries out, but it can't change it. It can't!

Valiant felt as though he were battering with bruised knuckles at a stone wall. A helpless anger simmered in him. "Suppose," he said bitterly, "that your mother one day, perhaps after long years, learns of your sacrifice. She is likely to guess in the end, I think. Will it add to her pleasure, do you fancy, to discover that out of this conception of filial loyalty—for it's that, I suppose!—you have spoiled your own life?"

She shuddered. "She will never learn," she said brokenly. "Oh, I know she would not have spoken. She would suffer anything for my happiness. But I wouldn't have her bear any more for my sake."

His anger faded suddenly, and when he looked at her again, tears were burning in his eyes.

"Shirley!" he said. "It's my heart, too, that you are binding on the wheel! I love you. I want nothing but you! I'd rather beg my bread from door to door with your hand in mine than sit on a throne without you! What can there be in life for me unless you share it? Think of our love! Think of the fate that brought me here to find you in Virginia! Think of our garden—where I thought we would live and work and dream, till we were old and gray—together, darling! Don't throw our love away like this!"

His entreaties left her only whiter, but unmoved. She shook her head, gazing at him through great clear tears that welled over and rolled down her cheeks.

"I can't fight," she said. "I have no strength left." She put out her hand as she spoke and dropped it with a little limp gesture that had in it tired despair, finality and hopelessness. It caught at his heart more strongly than any words. He felt a warm gush of pity and tenderness.

He took her hand gently without speaking, and pressed it hard against his lips. It seemed to him very small and cold.

They passed together through the wet bracken, his strong arm guiding her over the uneven path, and came to the open in silence.

"Don't come with me," she said then, and without a backward glance, went rapidly from him down the shimmering road.

### CHAPTER XXXI.

#### The Evening of an Old Score.

Rat-tat-tat-tat-tat!—Major Bristow's ivory-headed camphor-wood stick thumped on the great door of Damory court. The sound had a tang of impatience, for he had used the knocker more than once without result. Now he strode to the end of the porch and raised his voice in a stentorian bellow that brought Uncle Jefferson shuffling around the path from the kitchens with all the whites of his eyes showing.

"You dog-gone lazy rascal!" thundered the major. "What do you mean, sah, by keeping a gentleman cooling his heels on the door-step like a tax-collector? Where's your master?"

"Fo' de Lawd, Major, Ah ain' seen Mars' John sence dis mawnin'. Staht out aftah breakfas' en he nevah showed up ergin et all. Yo' reck'n whut de mattah, suh?" he added anxiously. "'Peahs lak sumpin' preyin' on he mind. Don' seem er bit hese'f lately."

"H-m-m!" The major looked thoughtful. "Isn't he well?"

"No, suh. Ain' et no mor'n er hummin-buhd dese las' few days. Jes' hangs eroun' lonesome lak. Don' laugh no mo', don' sing no mo'. Ain' play de pianny sence de day aftah de ball. Me en Daph moght'ly pestered 'bout him."

"Pshaw!" said the major. "Touch of spring fever, I rackon. Aunt Daph feeds him too well. Give him less fried chicken and more ash-cake and buttermilk. Make him some juleps."

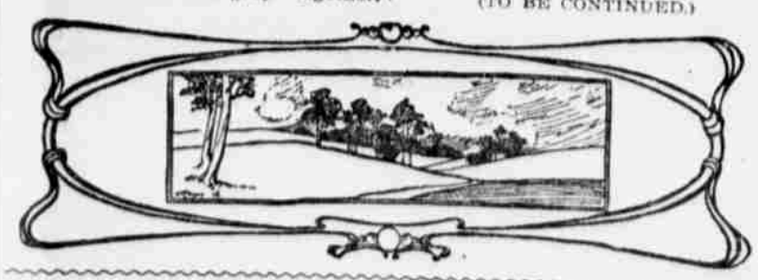
The old negro shook his head. "Moghty neah use up all dat mint-baid Ah foun'," he said, "but ain' do no good. Majah, Ah's sho' 'feahed sumpin' gwineter happen."

"Nonsense!" the major sniffed. "What fool idea's got under your wool now? Been seeing Mad Anthony again, I'll bet a dollar."

Uncle Jefferson swallowed once or twice with seeming difficulty and turned the gravel with his toe. "Dat's so," he said gloomily. "Ah done see de old man de yuddah day 'bout et Ant'y, he know! He see trouble er-comin' en trouble er-gwine. Dat same night de hoss-shoe drop offen de stable do', en dis ve'y mawnin' er buhd done fly inter de house. Das er mighty bad hoodoo, er mighty bad hoodoo!"

"Shucks!" said the major. "You're as loony as old Anthony, with your infernal signs. If your Mars' John's been out all day I reckon he'll turn up before long. I'll wait for him a while." He started in, but paused on the threshold. "Did you say—ah—that mint was all gone, Unc' Jefferson?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



## EFFICIENCY IN "NEWS STYLE"

### Columns of the Modern Journal Contain, It Is Claimed, the Best of English Phrasing.

It is seldom that a good word is said in academic circles for what is termed "newspaper English," meaning the terse, trenchant style in which the best journalists are in the habit of expressing themselves. The College of Journalism, however, recognizes the value of this style, and Prof. F. W. Beekman, a well-known educators, says:

"With all its faults I still believe in the news style as the most efficient style of this modern day of presenting information through the written word. It has been hammered out in the heat and stress of newspaper work to meet the demands of the millions for something to compel their attention, interest them and give them information in the quickest, clearest way possible."

There is much truth in this, but not all the truth. So-called "newspaper English" has left its indelible mark on the literature and especially the fiction of our times. The most successful stories are those told in the fewest words. The old-fashioned flowing periods, which produced verbal melody instead of recording facts, have lost their charm for novel readers, whose eager brains are anxious to absorb the tale rather than linger over "fine writing."

#### Will Lecture in America.

Celestin Demblon, whose books endeavor to prove that the plays attributed to Shakespeare were written by Lord Rutland, will come to this country to lecture on his theory. He is a deputy and professor of literature at Brussels university.

#### Asks Little of Himself.

"Gudson is a man whose distinguishing trait is self-approval."

"I understand now why everybody says he is easy to please."





#### A Startling Answer.

Mr. Brown had just had a telephone put in connecting his office and house, and was much pleased with it.

"I tell you, the telephone is a wonderful thing. I want you to dine with me this evening, and I will notify Mrs. Brown to expect you." Speaking through the telephone: "My friend Smith will dine with us this evening." Then to his friend: "Now listen and hear how plain her reply comes back." Mrs. Brown's reply came back with startling distinctness.

"Ask your friend Smith if he thinks we keep a hotel."

#### Placing the Blame.

A teacher, instructing her class in the composition of sentences, wrote two on the blackboard, one a misstatement of fact, and the other wrong grammatically. The sentences were: "The hen has three legs," and "Who done it?"

"Harry," she said to one of the youngsters, "go to the blackboard and show where the fault lies in those two sentences."

Harry slowly approached the board, evidently studying hard. Then he took the crayon and wrote:

"The hen never done it. God done it."



#### When the Minister Was Puzzled.

At a marriage service performed some time ago in a little country church in Georgia, when the minister said in a solemn tone: "Wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband?" instead of the woman answering for herself, a gruff man's voice answered, "I will."

Again the minister looked up surprised, not knowing what to make of it, when one of the groomsmen at the end of the row said:

"She is deaf. I am answering for her."—Lippincott's.

#### He Did Not Blame Them.

The new baby had proved itself the possessor of extraordinary lung-power. One day baby's brother, little Johnny, said to his mother:

"Ma, little brother came from heaven, didn't he?"

"Yes, dear," answered the mother.

Johnny was silent for a moment, and then he went on:

"I say, ma."

"What is it, Johnny?"

"I don't blame the angels for slinging him out, do you?"

#### She Had Been Away Before.

A fond husband was seeing his wife off with the children for their summer vacation in the country. As she got into the train he said, "My dear, won't you take some fiction to read?"

"Oh, no," she responded, sweetly. "I shall depend upon your letters from home."

#### The Cause.

Little Willie—How did you get the red marks on your nose, Uncle Dal?

Uncle Dal—Glasses, my boy, glasses.

Little Willie—Glasses of what, Uncle Dal?—Western Mail.

#### New Management.

"This hotel is under a new management."

"Why, I still see the old proprietor around."

"Yes; but he got married last week."—Kansas City Journal.

#### In Olden Days.

George Junior had just chopped down that cherry tree.

"Pop," he said, just like that, "let's bury the hatchet."

Which shows how easy it is to originate an historic phrase.